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Watergate Fallout Continues

Fourteen years after the "third-rate burglary" that led to the first presidential resignation in history, Richard M. Nixon has emerged once again on the national scene as a respected confidant of President Reagan. He has gone from the cover-up of Watergate to the cover of Newsweek, his status as an unindicted co-conspirator ignored by the revisionist pop historians.

But if Nixon does have the nine lives of a cat, it must be a black one. Evidence continues to bubble to the surface that Nixon brought misfortune to the American public when he set out to engineer his reelection in 1972 by whatever means necessary.

One still-unresolved mystery of the Watergate scandal involved Greek-American businessman Thomas Pappas. An investigator for the Watergate special prosecutor concluded in a report that Pappas—who admittedly cooperated with the CIA "anytime my help was requested"—was the conduit for illegal contributions to the Nixon-Agnew reelection campaign from Greek businessmen in 1972. He had performed the same service in 1968, funneling money to the Nixon-Agnew campaign from the Greek military junta, according to House committee testimony in 1976 by the former U.S. ambassador in Athens, Henry Tasca.

Since the Greek junta's central intelligence service was not only the source of the funds sent to the Nixon-Agnew campaign via Pappas but was itself being subsidized by the CIA, this meant that the American spy agency was indirectly contributing to the Republican candidates.

Documents prepared by the special prosecutor's staff and recently discovered in their files by Greek

journalist Elias Demetracopoulos indicate that Pappas had also solicited at least \$25,000 for the Nixon-Agnew campaign from a Greek businessman who subsequently was awarded a fuel contract for the U.S. Sixth Fleet.

The prosecutors stopped short of calling the campaign contribution a quid pro quo for the fuel contract, but they did note that the Pentagon had received lower bids for the fuel. Pappas' own company was given a subcontract.

Pappas was also suspected by prosecutors of contributing some of the money demanded by the seven men arrested for the June 17, 1972, burglary at the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee. He told prosecutors, however, that the only money he had provided was a \$50,000 personal loan to Attorney General John Mitchell to buy an apartment.

"Some documentary evidence indicates that those involved in the cover-up may have expected funds for it from Pappas," one special prosecutor report says. Notes seized from convicted Watergate figure Dwight Chapin referred to a meeting with Pappas and contained the cryptic notation: "7." The prosecutors said: "We have no explanation of the meaning of this notation, although it has been suggested that there were seven [original] Watergate defendants."

Indeed, one of the many references to Pappas on White House tape transcripts during the cover-up period was this one by Nixon: "I think it's a matter of fact, though, that somebody said be sure to talk to Pappas because he's being very helpful on the, uh, Watergate thing."